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Paul Testifies Before Ways and Means Subcommittee on Social Security *Urges Congress to Support Legislation Protecting Privacy*

Washington, D.C. - On Thursday, Congressman Ron Paul testified before the Subcommittee on Social Security of the Ways and Means Committee. The topic of the hearing was the abuse of the Social Security number. Paul said that the Congress that created the Social Security system never intended for the Social Security number to become a national identification number. Paul said, "The Social Security number has been transformed from an administrative device used to administer the Social Security program into a *de facto* national ID number. Today, most Americans cannot get a job, get married, open a bank account, or even get a fishing license without their Social Security number. Congress has been all too eager to expand the use of the Social Security number as a uniform identifier. For example, in 1996, Congress required employers to report the Social Security number of employees as part of the "new hires" database, while in 1998, 210 members of Congress voted to allow states to force citizens to produce a Social Security number before they could exercise their right to vote." In response to the increased government invasion on citizen's privacy, Paul introduced the "Freedom and Privacy Restoration Act" (HR 220) on the first day of the 106th Congress. The bill forbids Federal or State governments from using the Social Security number for purposes not directly related to administering the Social Security system. Paul will testify about the bill before the subcommittee on Government Management, Information, and Technology of the Government Reform and Oversight Committee next week. "Since I introduced the 'Freedom and Privacy Restoration Act,' my office has received countless calls, letter, faxes, and e-mails from Americans around the country who are tired of having to divulge their Social Security numbers in order to get a job, open bank account, or go fishing," said Paul. "The strong public outrage over the federal banking regulators' 'know your customer' scheme, as well as the attempt to turn state drivers' licenses into a national ID card, and the Clinton Administration's so-called 'medical privacy' proposals all reveal the extent to which the American people oppose the surveillance state. These Americans believe that since Congress created this problem, Congress must fix it." Paul concluded, "Finally, I would remind my colleagues that no private organization has the power to abuse personal liberty on as massive a scale as the federal government. After all, consumers have the right to refuse to do business with any private entity that asks for a Social Security number, whereas citizens cannot lawfully refuse to deal with government agencies. Furthermore, most of the major invasions of privacy, from the abuse of IRS files to the abuse of the FBI by administrations of both parties have occurred by government agents. I hope that this hearing is the first step toward Congressional action designed to stop the use of the Social Security number as a national ID number."

